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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

United Republic of Tanzania*: draft resolution

International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 48/188 of 21 December 1993, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 50/117 A and B of 20 December 1995 and 51/185 of 16 December 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/45 of 26 July 1996,

Taking into account that the natural phenomenon commonly known as 'El Niño' has had an acute impact in several regions of the world, with particular severity and frequency in the coastal countries of the Pacific Ocean,

Noting that El Niño has a cyclical character and causes great damage to the world's population, economy and environment, particularly in developing countries, among which the least developed countries, the small island developing States and the landlocked countries are the most vulnerable,

Considering that said phenomenon has produced devastating effects, resulting in large material, economic and human losses, especially in the coastal countries of the Pacific Ocean and, in particular, in developing countries, small island States and landlocked countries,

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

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Acknowledging with concern the possible effects that El Niño may have on global weather patterns, such as abnormal droughts and precipitation around the world, leading to a shortage in world food supplies and famine in several regions that could extend over a number of years,

Taking into account that the major El Niño events of this century have occurred fairly regularly and are often preceded by a number of distinct warning signs, which, with an appropriate increase and exchange of data and information, could assist in the modelling and prediction of its recurrence and enhance the capabilities of affected countries to mitigate the negative social, economic and environmental impacts that the phenomenon causes,

Considering also that the national efforts of the countries affected have been insufficient owing to the magnitude of the natural disaster and that international cooperation and solidarity therefore become indispensable,

1. Invites States to incorporate in sustainable development programmes, at the national, regional and international levels, strategies to prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate the damages caused by natural disasters;

2. Commends the national, regional and subregional efforts of affected countries, particularly those of developing countries, that have taken measures in order to reduce the impact of El Niño;

3. Urges the Secretary-General to promote the creation of an international comprehensive cooperation mechanism including early warning as well as the development of long-term strategies that would lead to the prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation of damages caused by El Niño; such measures should include financial assistance, the transfer of appropriate technology and wide dissemination of information and knowledge, within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and, as part of the activities of the Decade and as part of the International Framework of Action for the Decade,[1] the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[2] and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and the Plan of Action contained therein;[3]

4. Urges the organizations of the United Nations system, especially the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Meterological Organization, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the International Council of Scientific Unions, within the framework of the

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[1] See resolution 44/236, annex.

[2] Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, to contribute further to a comprehensive approach and study of El Niño and to intensify their cooperation with the regions affected by the phenomenon, especially with developing countries, small island States and landlocked countries;

5. Invites States, intergovernmental organizations and all those participating in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries to support global and regional observation systems and research, including the dissemination of data on El Niño, to prevent, mitigate and redress the negative effects of the phenomenon;

6. Requests the Secretary-General, within the context of paragraph 3 of the present resolution, to promote an intergovernmental meeting of experts and scientists in order to facilitate the exchange of information and national experiences related to the monitoring of El Niño as well as to strategies for the reduction of its impact;

7. Also requests the Secretary-General to invite to the meeting, requested in paragraph 6 above, as special guests, representatives of academic and scientific institutions devoted to the study and analysis of El Niño, and to provide the meeting with the reports of regional meetings and symposiums specializing in the phenomenon;

8. Urges the Secretary-General to include the El Niño phenomenon and its consequences in the ongoing activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to improve the effectiveness and increase international coordination of early-warning systems with regard to natural and similar disasters;

9. Recommends that long-term public awareness and information programmes related to natural disasters induced by El Niño and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment be integrated into comprehensive national disaster management programmes that focus on preventive strategies for risk reduction and that these programmes be included as integral elements of United Nations support for social and economic development programmes;

10. Requests that proposals for effective and coordinated international mechanisms for early warning pertaining to the periodic occurrence of hazards associated with El Niño be considered within the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade and the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly in its fifty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including proposals on how the United Nations system might be enhanced so as to enable it to coordinate effective action;

12. Decides to include a sub-item entitled "The El Niño phenomenon" in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session, under the agenda item entitled "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation".